

"FOURTEEN FEET IN THE VALLEY"

Slogan of the National Deep Waterway Convention in New Orleans to Be Attended by President Taft.

Meeting Will Deal With Proposed Widening of River Routes—Projects of Immense Importance to the United States.

By JAMES A. EDGERTON.

If the dikes hold, President Taft will go by boat from St. Louis to the deep waterway convention at New Orleans. It will be a crucial test and will show whether all the money spent by the government on the Father of Waters has been in vain. Should the president succeed in making the whole trip without the banks giving way congress may be encouraged to spend a few more hundred millions on the great river. This was doubtless the idea of the deep waterway people when they invited the president to take the steamboat trip. If the Mississippi is strong enough to withstand the extra strain it is certainly strong enough to be made into a ship canal. It was a great scheme, for it would work either way. If the dikes did not hold, congress would have to vote money to re-enforce them. Thus the appropriation was safe whatever happened. They had it coming and going. Whoever suggested the presidential trip down the Mississippi is a genius.

The ship canal from the great lakes to the gulf is bound to come. Roosevelt favored it, Taft favors it. Uncle Joe Cannon favors it, and all it now lacks is the consent of Senator Aldrich. As it is not located in Rhode Island, Aldrich has not become wildly enthusiastic in its favor. But Aldrich

to own a ship canal to Joliet whether she ever got it to New Orleans or not. Now the state of Illinois has voted twenty millions more to carry it from Joliet toward the Mississippi. Even when it reaches the big river, however, the work will only be started, for the great task lies in straightening, deepening and making permanent the channel of that stream itself. If the Father of Waters were a well behaved, dependable river that would stay put, matters would be simplified, but it has a habit of changing its course overnight, so that its pilots must learn it all over every trip. This is not only hard on the pilots, but on the boats, which may run on a new sand bar or a sunken log at any moment. It is one thing to dig a ship canal and another to make it stay dug, especially if it is in the Mississippi. Today the channel may be all right, and tomorrow it may be a mile away, running over somebody's plantation. Moreover, the river is so big and carries such a volume of water that it is hard to discipline it.

An Elevated River.

Most rivers run in a trough, but the Mississippi runs on a ridge. It is higher than the surrounding country. This elevation it has built up itself through the vast amounts of sediment that it tears out of the landscape and carries downstream. A man may not

Mississippi made him sidestep being too specific. If that river can be made to settle down and stay at home it will save trouble.

"Fourteen Feet Through the Valley."

That the supporters of the deep waterway are in earnest is shown by the fact that they have written poetry about it. This poetry evidently came hard and resulted from a stern sense of duty. We forbear quoting more than one stanza, but the rest show the same grim resolve to write a song or die:

We represent the people who want the waterway—
Fourteen feet through the valley.
We represent the shippers, who have the biggest say—
Fourteen feet through the valley.
We want the ships a-running and lowering the rate—
Fourteen feet through the valley.
And if we get the water we'll guarantee the freight—
Fourteen feet through the valley.

The proposed ship canal connects with Lake Michigan at Chicago, follows the Chicago drainage canal to Joliet, thence down the Illinois river to the Mississippi and by the Mississippi to the gulf. "Fourteen feet through the valley" represents depth at low water. The project includes more than the ship canal. It also embraces nine feet up the Ohio to Pittsburg, six feet up the Mississippi to Minneapolis and six feet up the Missouri to Sioux City.

Tom Reed once said that "the Missouri river is not navigable and the Mississippi river ought not to be," but it was on one of his grouchy days when most of the congressmen were yelling for river and harbor appropriations. The witticism should now be revised and made to read, "The Mississippi river is navigable, and the Missouri river ought to be." When it is reflected that the great river and its tributaries can freight from a vast territory extending from Pittsburg to Omaha and from Minneapolis to New Orleans and that by means of the ship canal and the proposed connection with the Red River of the North it could also reach the great lakes region and the Canadian northwest the importance of the giant scheme can be dimly realized. It would extend the coast line of the nation by multiplied thousands of miles, would relieve crop congestions throughout the vast wheat, corn and cattle belt, would lower freight rates, would make a continuous ship canal from New York via the enlarged Erie canal to Buffalo, thence through the great lakes to Chicago and from there down the Mississippi to the gulf, would furnish a new outlet to such important trade centers as Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Louisville, Sioux City, Omaha, Kansas City, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Memphis and would be a boon to the farmers and merchants of the entire interior of the United States and Canada.

Will Reduce Freight Rates.

Take the question of freight tariffs alone. Not only the boomers of the deep waterway project, but commercial bodies in many cities and towns of the country, have adopted the motto, "River regulation is rate regulation." The proof of the statement as it relates to the Mississippi valley is furnished by the report of the chief of engineers a few years ago:

"Comparative rates between Pittsburg and Memphis by rail and river on soft coal: By rail, 807 miles, \$3.73 per ton; by river, 1,218 miles, 42 cents per ton." Figures from this same report show another interesting comparison between the rail and river rates: "St. Louis to St. Paul, by rail, 573 miles, first class, 63 cents per hundred; sixth, 21 cents; by river, 729 miles, first class, 40 cents; sixth, 14 cents." It is the prediction of an army engineer formerly in charge of river improvements at Pittsburg that the cost of coal transportation to New Orleans, 2,000 miles away, at present about 75 cents per ton, including the cost of returning empties and all incidentals, will be reduced to 40 cents when a nine foot channel is obtained the year round. This will be about one-fifteenth of the cheapest existing rail rate.

Of almost equal importance with cheaper freight rates is the prompt moving of the crops. The increasing car-shortages show the railroads unequal to the task. There appears no simpler, cheaper and more effectual method of meeting the situation than by the use of the rivers.

Here is the real force behind the ship canal proposition. It is business, not sentiment. That is the reason it will win. Whether it is "fourteen feet through the valley" or ten, it will gain the day at some depth. The chief engineer who reported on the proposition was inclined to cast doubts on the fourteen foot thing, in spite of the poetry put over in its behalf. He thought a less number of feet might answer and would not be in the same danger from the changeable Mississippi current. This may have been a case where official timidity tried to get in the way of the American spirit, to be run over and ground under the wheels in consequence. The promoters of the enterprise all live along the Mississippi, have studied the situation and believe that fourteen feet is feasible and necessary. Certain it is that freighters are ever growing in size and hence have deeper bottoms. If this canal is designed to carry ocean trade, even fourteen feet will soon be too shallow.

To show his faith in the project William K. Kavanaugh, the president of the deep waterway commission, has incorporated a \$10,000,000 corporation to navigate the Mississippi and to promote the ship canal. It is this commission that has arranged the New Orleans gathering and will take President Taft down the river in the steamship Mississippi, always provided that the dikes hold.

TAFT'S NEXT TRIPS.

Figuring Already on Visits to Panama and Alaska.

TO GO TO ISTHMUS ANNUALLY

Has Announced His Purpose of Seeing For Himself Each Twelvemonth Progress on Canal—His Ideas on Alaska Combated.

Although President Taft's present tour of the United States is far from completion, plans are already being made for his next two trips, which will take him from Washington to Panama and Alaska. It is reported that the president is figuring on a run down to the isthmus of Panama and back during the three weeks of the Christmas recess of congress. The president is making plans, too, for a trip to Alaska next summer.

The trip to Panama will depend altogether on Mrs. Taft's health. Reports from Beverly of her steady improvement have delighted the president, and he is looking forward to the sea voyage to the isthmus with her.

The president intended to have Mrs. Taft accompany him on his present western trip, but her health would not permit.

When the president visited Panama last spring he announced that it would be his policy to make a trip to the isthmus once a year. He added that he wanted first hand information on the progress of events there and that he believed a visit by the president to have a most wholesome effect upon the canal's working force.

Included Alaska in Present Tour.

The president had originally included Alaska in his present jaunt, but the late adjournment of congress forced him to cut it out. The president wishes to see the territory with his own eyes before recommending the legislation that he has proposed in regard to its government.

Next to the president's tariff speech his Alaska program has probably aroused the most antagonism of anything said on his trip. A lot of people in the Pacific coast states have business interests in Alaska, and many more have relatives who have settled in that country.

The latter are ruffled at the president's characterization of Alaska's population as nomadic and unfit for self government. They argue that the mining town populations in Alaska are no more lacking in the qualifications necessary for self government than were the miners of California and other mineral sections of the west that have developed into great commonwealths.

Opposed to the President.

The Pacific coast people who are opposed to the president's proposed government by commission in Alaska say that is the form which the wealthy men of the territory want. They want the commission because it will mean a less number of persons with whom they will have to deal in getting satisfactory legislation.

The Pacific coast people add that all of the common people of Alaska, on the other hand, are demanding self government.

MAN WHO TAUGHT WRIGHTS.

Wilbur Gives Credit For Interest in Flying Machine to Octave Chanute.

Speaking in New York of his first attempts to fly, Wilbur Wright declared that his interest in aeroplanes and that of his brother was first aroused by Octave Chanute's book on aerial navigation.

"When my brother Orville and I began working on aeroplanes we simply wanted to get something that would stay in the air. We started with contrivances like box kites. 'Giders' we called them. We glided with them, and then we installed engines, and they actually stayed in the air. After that the machines which are called Wright aeroplanes were finished.

"My brother and I were in the bicycle business in Dayton when we became interested in kites. We experimented with them. Then we got hold of Octave Chanute's book on aerial navigation. We read it with great interest. After more studying we built gliding machines. During all of this time we were in the bicycle business. We did not have much money, but all we had was put into our aerial experiments.

"We knew a great deal about motors, and with this knowledge we were able to install into our gliders motors that were able to keep us in the air. That was the way we came to invent aeroplanes. I have never studied dirigible balloons. I don't suppose I know the first thing about them."

St. Louisian Has a Hot-Air-Ship.

L. S. Flateau, a St. Louisian, has built a model of an aluminum hulled airship, which, he believes, will solve most of the difficulties which the airships so far built have been unable to overcome. Mr. Flateau's idea is to fill the aluminum shell with hot air and keep the air always at 200 degrees F. with four powerful Bunsen burners.

Longer Trip Than President Taft's.

Mrs. Phillip N. Moore, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, is one of the busiest women in the country. She is on a tour which will last longer and carry her over more territory than the present trip of President Taft. For several weeks she has been attending state conventions of women's clubs.

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Sir James Crichton Browne, LL.D.—F.R.S. of London,

gives the best reasons for eating more

Quaker Oats

In an article published in the Youth's Companion of September 23rd, 1909, Dr. Browne, the great medical authority on foods, says, about brain and muscle building—

"There is one kind of food that seems to me of marked value as a food to the brain and to the whole body throughout childhood and adolescence (youth), and that is oatmeal.

"Oats are the most nutritious of all the cereals, being richer in fats, organic phosphorus and lecithins."

He says oatmeal is gaining ground with the well-to-do of Great Britain. He speaks of it as the mainstay of the Scottish laborer's diet and says it pro-

duces a big-boned, well-developed, mentally energetic race.

His experiments prove that good oatmeal such as Quaker Oats not only furnishes the best food for the human being, but eating it strengthens and enlarges the thyroid gland—this gland is intimately connected with the nourishing processes of the body.

In conclusion he says— "It seems probable therefore that the bulk and brawniness of the Northerners (meaning the Scotch) has been in some measure due to the stimulation of the thyroid gland by oatmeal porridge in childhood."

The Scotch eat Quaker Oats because it is the best of all oat-meals.

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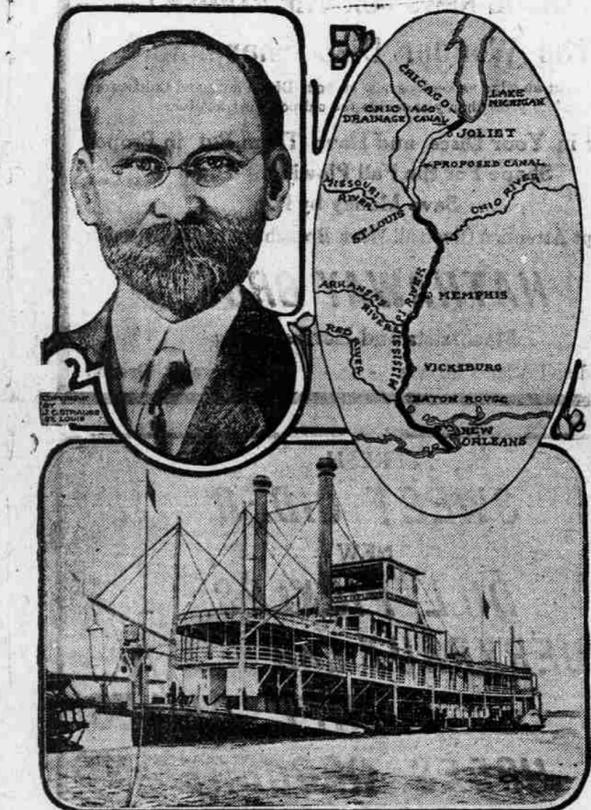
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W. K. KAVANAUGH OF CHICAGO, PRESIDENT OF LAKES TO THE GULF DEEP WATERWAY CONVENTION—STEAMBOAT MISSISSIPPI, WHICH WILL CARRY PRESIDENT TAFT—MAP OF ROUTE.

will not live forever and it is said will retire in 1911. His retirement may mean the ship canal's arrival, or if not then it will put in an appearance later. Nothing can stop it. It has been a long time coming, but is almost here. The refrain "fourteen feet in the valley" will be sung till ships run from Joliet to Baton Rouge. At the New Orleans convention, which lasts from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2, President Taft will speak the first day, Vice President Sherman the second day and Speaker Cannon the third day. This shows that the deep waterway scheme is already drawing deep water. There will be so many governors present that it will be easier to name those that are not on hand than those that are. There will also be such a numerous delegation of congressmen and senators that it will look like a session of congress on pork day. All these governors, senators and congressmen will follow the president down the river. It is questionable if so much greatness was ever before afloat on one stream at one time. If the Mississippi can get away with all that, it can bear up under the shipping of the world.

Chicago Drainage Canal.

The only reasons the lakes to gulf canal has not been dug before this are that it costs a bunch of money and the engineers have not finished figuring out how to do it. Chicago has made a start by digging her drainage ditch, which she calls by the more polite name of the sanitary canal and St. Louis calls names that are not fit to print. The sanitary canal extends as far as Joliet and really is a large even if it is not a beautiful or sweet smelling stream. Chicago might have dug it much smaller and had it ample for sanitary purposes, but that is not Chicago's way. She was determined

be able to lift himself by the boot straps, but the Mississippi has done something like that. It is not only a restless but an aspiring stream that wants to climb.

Dikes on the Mississippi are as necessary as the dikes of Holland. If it were not for them the lower river would wander all over the scenery. New Orleans would be another Venice. Some of the Louisiana and Mississippi plantations would have to be cultivated by submarines. That is the reason Mississippi floods cause seven different kinds of consternation in the lower valley. The dikes do not always hold, and it is hard to repair them with several million tons of water pressing through. It is hoped, however, that there will be low water when Taft makes his trip, so that the unusual weight will not cause an inundation. Perhaps the original idea in having Mark Twain pilot the president's boat was to relieve the strain. Mark has a way of lightening things up. He was afraid to tackle the job, however. Perhaps he reflected that the congressmen in the follow up boats might have a number of undelivered speeches in their heads, and these would be so heavy they would cause the river to bulge still more.

One of the deep waterway conventions was held at Memphis, and this was attended by Mr. Roosevelt, who also went to it in a boat. Nothing more disastrous happened than that the president ripped a steamboat captain up the back. Nobody remembers what the captain did, but everybody recalls what Roosevelt said. How could they forget? Thus words sometimes live longer than deeds. At that time the president expressed himself in an enthusiastic way for the ship canal as a general proposition, but refused to go into details. Perhaps thoughts of the shifting bed of the